FROM THE WATCHMAN'S CORNER!
Lt. Col Jack Mohr

"a great people, or nation, and a company of nations."

THE LOST TRIBES OF ISRAEL

Still Lost in Church Theology

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"When the Most High divided to the nations their inheritance, when he separated the sons of Adam, he set the bounds of the people according to the number of the children of Israel. For the Lord's portion is his people; Jacob is the lot of his inheritance."

DEUTERONOMY 32: 8-9.)

The Lost Tribes of Israel

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By RICHMOND N. STUART

IT WAS PAUL who first exclaimed that the rediscovery of the Israel peoples and their manifestation to the world would mean nothing less than life from the dead. The apostle quoted Moses: "Rejoice, ye Gentiles, with his people," having first identified "His people" in eight significant clauses:

"Who are Israelites; to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises; Whose are the fathers, and of whom...Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen." (Rom. 9: 4-5; 15: 10.)

If the so-called "Lost Tribes" are truly lost and assimilated among the Gentiles as conventional wisdom would have us believe, "the sure word of prophecy" would have proved to be most *unsure*, indeed! But historians, both biblical and secular, record the regathering of Israel in new lands far to the North and West of Canaan (ancient Palestine) (Isa. 49: 12). True to the word of prophecy, Israel has become a multitudinous people in the earth: "a great nation," "a nation and a company of nations," and "many nations," albeit, called by a new name.

On a six-sided clay prism in the British Museum, London, is the Assyrian King Sennacherib's record of the eight campaigns against the northern ten-tribed Kingdom of Israel which began in 703 B.C. and ended in 689 B.C. It should be noted that the Assyrian King's inscription refers to the captives, not by their name, "Israel," but "Beth Omri" (House of Omri), after the name of their King. That they were not known by their spiritual name, "Israel," which was conferred upon their patriarch, Jacob, by an angel or messenger of the Lord of Peniel (Gen. 32: 24-30). was a stroke of Divine Judgment.

National Blindness was the inevitable consequence of Israel's unfaithfulness in worshiping the false idols of the Canaanites and their rejection of the law of the Lord to follow the statutes of Omri (Deut. 28: 28). The cause and duration of Israel's estrangement from the Lord is given by Moses in Chapter 26 of the Book of Leviticus:

"And if ye shall despise my statutes, or if your soul abhor my judgments, so that ye will not do all my commandments, but that ye break my covenant....Then I will walk contrary unto you also in fury; and I, even I, will chastise you seven times for your sins...and I will destroy your high places, and cut down your images...and I will scatter you among the heathen." (Lev. 26: 15-33.)

During the "seven times" of chastisement, the exiles were no longer called by the name, Israel, but, oddly, they became known by an even older family name, 'Saac's sons, or Saxons, after Isaac, the child of promise: "In Isaac shall thy seed be called" (Gen. 21: 12).

Eventually, "the outcasts of Israel" would become known by a new name, "Christians," as it is written in Isaiah 60: 16: "And thou shalt know that I the Lord am thy Saviour and thy Redeemer, the mighty One of Jacob." But, for a time, they

were to remain unrecognized. However, they were never lost in the Lord's sight:

"Behold, I will send for many fishers, saith the Lord, and they shall fish them; and after will I send for many hunters, and they shall hunt them from every mountain, and from every hill....For mine eyes are upon all their ways: they are not hid from my face, neither is their iniquity hid from mine eyes." (Jer. 16: 16-17.)

"For my name's sake will I defer mine anger, and for my praise will I refrain for thee, that I cut thee not off. Behold, I have refined thee....I have chosen thee in the furnace of affliction....Even for mine own sake, will I do it: for how should my name be polluted? and I will not give my glory unto another. Hearken unto me, O Jacob and Israel, my called; I am he; I am the first, I also am the last." (Isa. 48: 9-12.)

It is inconceivable that the so–called Lost Tribes of Israel have disappeared for all time, never to be restored as the Lord's Kingdom Nation. If such were true, the entire body of Scripture would collapse without foundation. The Redemption of Israel and the Restoration of God's earthly Kingdom is the essence of the national message of the Bible.

The House of Israel's role in the Lord's great plan of restitution is epitomized by the Apostle Peter:

"But ye are a chosen generation [race], a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar [consecrated] people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light." (I Peter 2: 9.)

"Listen, O isles, unto me; and hearken, ye people, from far," is the Lord's salutation to Jacob–Israel's descendants (Isa. 49: 1). Through His Prophet Isaiah, the Lord continues:

"Thou art my servant O Israel, in whom I will be glorified....And he said, It is a light thing that thou shouldest be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel: I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth.

"Thus saith the Lord, the redeemer of Israel, and his Holy One...In an acceptable time have I heard thee, and in a day of salvation have I helped thee: and I will preserve thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, to establish the earth, to cause to inherit the desolate [undeveloped] heritages." (Isa. 49: 3, 6-8.)

That the so–called "Lost Tribes" were never forsaken, nor lost in the Lord's sight, is made abundantly clear by His analogy:

"Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee. Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands; thy walls are continually before me." (Isa. 49: 15-16.)

A most remarkable testimony concerning the lost identity of the House of Israel is given in Hosea 1, verses 4 through 10. Two Hebrew names are used to describe Israel's estrangement from the Lord:

"*Loruhamah*; for I will no more have mercy upon the house of Israel; but I will utterly take them away." (V. 6.)

"*Loammi*: for ye are not my people, and I will not be your God." (V. 9.)

"Yet the number of the children of Israel shall be as the sand of the sea, which cannot be measured nor numbered; and it shall come to pass, that in the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not my people, there it shall be said unto them, Ye are the sons of the living God." (V. 10.)

The National Amnesia that blinded Israel in the Old Testament was extant in Paul's day and his exhortation to his brethren in the New Testament is no less germane now to our present generation:

"For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery...that blindness in

part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in." (Rom. 11: 25.)1

Despite the fact that the descendants of the Lost Tribes eventually emerged from historic obscurity as sovereign nations in the West, national blindness still causes many to forget the Lord's exhortation:

"Look unto the rock whence ye are hewn, and to the hole of the pit whence ye are digged. Look unto Abraham your father, and unto Sarah that bare you." (Isa. 51: 1-2.)

To find "the lost sheep of the House of Israel" in the world today, all one needs to do is recognize the nations and peoples in whom the Lord's covenant promises have been fulfilled.

In a prophecy that would have a long-term fulfillment, Amos gives the Lord's promise that, despite the Kingdom's sinfulness, He will not utterly destroy the house of Jacob:

"For, lo, I will command, and I will sift the house of Israel among all nations, like as corn is sifted in a sieve, yet shall not the least grain fall upon the earth." (Amos 9: 9.)

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1 "The fulness of the Gentiles" refers to "the seven times of the Gentiles" when the Kingdoms of this world (order) were under the dominion of the Babylonian Succession of World Empires--Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece and Rome, which divided East and West to become the Continental Powers. The Babylonian Succession of four empires ran concurrently with the seven times of Israel's chastisement in exile. See Documentary Studies, Vol. I, p. 113, and Study in Daniel,** p. 46, by Howard B. Rand.*

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Because of their national sins, the House of Israel was given a bill of divorce (Jer. 3: 8 & 14). But the Lord promised that Israel would be redeemed through the suffering and death of their Messiah (Isa. 53: 5-8). How great is their salvation is recorded by the prophet:

"Thy seed shall inherit the Gentiles, and make the desolate cities to be inhabited...for thou shalt forget the shame of thy youth, and shalt not remember the reproach of thy widowhood any more.

"For thy Maker is thine husband; the Lord of hosts is his name; and thy Redeemer the Holy One of Israel; The God of the whole earth shall he be called....For a small moment have I forsaken thee; but with great mercies will I gather thee. In a little wrath I hid my face from thee for a moment; but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith the Lord thy Redeemer." (Isa. 54: 3-8.)

The prophets explain how the Lord God, under the terms of a New Covenant, will implement the Law Covenant made at Mount Sinai. It would not be a new covenant in the sense that the law covenant would be annulled or diminished. But its "newness" was the Lord's promise:

"But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people." (Jer. 31: 33 and also see Ez. 36: 24-28.)

Some six hundred years after the terms of the New Covenant were foretold by the prophets, Jesus Christ was born and by His Ministry He fulfilled Malachi's prophecy:

"And the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant...saith the Lord of hosts." (Mal. 3: 1.)

During His Ministry, Jesus made the terms of the New Covenant clear. The laws once written upon tables of stone must be written in the hearts of His people. He changed no laws but by His words

He made keeping the spirit of the law infinitely more important than the outward appearance of keeping the letter of the law.

In refutation of the law that was to be written in their hearts, a pernicious church doctrine that we are now no longer under the law is accepted by many who call themselves "New Testament Christians." Yet Jesus upheld the Old Testament "and beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself" (Luke 24: 27). But to the Jews in Jerusalem He said:

"For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me: for he wrote of me. But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words?" (John 5: 46-47.)

The First Century Christians knew who they were. In the Acts of the Apostles they had been told:

"Ye are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant which god made with our fathers, saying unto Abraham, And in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed." (Acts 3: 25.)

That the Messiah had come was made clear, for Jesus left no doubt concerning Who He is and to whom He came: "I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Matt. 15: 24). And when He sent forth His apostles, He commanded them, saying:

"Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not: but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. And as ye go, preach, saying, The Kingdom of heaven is at hand." (Matt. 10: 5-7.)

Jesus testified that a prophet has no honor in his own country (Luke 4: 43–44). So it was not simply for fear of the Jews that the Lord left Judea. Until near the end of His Ministry, He walked in Galilee where remnants of the tribes were still living in their tribal territories. Manasseh and Ephraim particularly are mentioned (II Chron. 34: 9). These were undoubtedly "the gleaning grapes" which Isaiah said would be left in the land (Isa. 17: 6). Here, among the Benjamites and the gleaning grapes of "the outmost fruitful branches," Jesus found a responsive remnant of all of the tribes of Israel and Judah apart from the heterogeneous, largely Idumean, population of Judea.

Concerning the remnant of the northern Kingdom living in the territory of Zebulun and Naphtali, the Lord, through Isaiah, declared that, "if they speak not according to the law and to the testimony, there is no light in them" (Isa. 8: 20–22). However, the Lord promised: "The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light" (Isa. 9: 2). Then followed the glorious promise of the One who would come as "the light of the world" (John 3: 19; 8: 12; 9: 5):

"For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this." (Isa. 9: 6-7.)

A remarkable feature of this promise by the Lord is that it addressed the remnants of the northern ten-tribed Kingdom of Israel. It was they upon whom the light would shine. It was they who would see a great light and it was their land, Galilee, which would see the Light of the Lord's promised shining.

Judah in the south received no such promise. In a parable the Lord of hosts had pronounced judgment upon Judah and Jerusalem:

"Even so will I break this people and this city, as one breaketh a potter's vessel, that cannot be made whole again." (Jer. 19: 11.)

The finality of this judgment was confirmed by Jesus:

"For the days shall come upon thee, that

thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side...and not leave thee one stone upon another." (Luke 19: 43-44.)

The judgment came when the Jewish nation was destroyed in the appalling destruction of Jerusalem by Roman legions under Titus in 70 A.D.

From its inception, the early church was unable to distinguish between Israel, Judah and the Jews. The erroneous identification of the false Jews as "Judah" and, moreover, as "Israel," led to the confusion that has blinded the church to this day. Yet Jesus had said, "I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews,*2* and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan" (Rev. 2: 9; 3: 9).

When Jesus left Galilee to confront the Jews in Jerusalem, He knew the identity of those who sought to kill Him and usurp His Kingship as David's Greater Son. To those Jews who believed on Him, Jesus said, "If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8: 31–32).

But the Pharisees answered Him, "We be Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage to any man: how sayest thou, Ye shall be made free?" (John 8: 33).

This was a tacit admission that, although they were "the seed of Abraham" (through Ishmael and Esau), they were not "the seed of Promise" through Isaac and Jacob–Israel who had long been in bondage in Egypt.

Jesus knew they were of Esau of the Edomite Idumean confederacy in the vision of the Prophet Obadiah:

"Every one of the mount of Esau may be cut off by slaughter. For thy violence against thy brother Jacob shame shall cover thee, and thou shalt be cut off for ever." (Obadiah 1: 9-10.)

When Jesus said, "the scribes and Pharisees sit in Moses' seat," He meant they had taken control of the Jewish nation, albeit, subject to Rome.

Jesus knew well the Scriptures concerning "the inhabitants of Jerusalem"*3* who would reject Him. He was fully aware of the distinction the Lord God made within Judah between those He called "the good figs," who were carried away captive into the land of the Chaldeans (Babylon) for their own good, and "the evil figs"*4* whom He called "the residue of Jerusalem." The latter included Zedekiah, king of Judah, and his princes that remained in the land and also them that dwelt in Egypt.

Using the analogy of the fig tree, Jesus used a barren fig tree as the symbol of Jewry, and said:

"Let no fruit grow on thee henceforward for ever. And presently the fig tree withered away." (Matt. 21: 19.)

In the Kingdom parable of the wicked husbandmen, Jesus indicted those He knew sought to kill Him:

"Jesus saith unto them, Did ye never read in the scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner:*5* this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes? Therefore say I unto you, The Kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof." (Matt. 21: 42-43.)

Today the people of the Kingdom, to which Jesus referred, are very much in evidence in the

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2 Jews--Hebrew Yehudim, meaning "of Judah."

3 The inhabitants of Jerusalem - Ez. 11: 15; 15: 6; 16: 1-3.

4 Evil figs - Jer. 24: 1, 2, 3, 5 & 8; 29: 17.

5 Jesus refers to Himself as the Cornerstone of the Stone Kingdom which smote the great image (of Nebuchadnezzar's dream) upon its feet of part iron and part clay, to become a great mountain (government or Kingdom), to fill the whole earth (Dan. 2: 31-34).

Saxon–Israel nations of Western Christendom. The long trek of the lost tribes from ancient Palestine to the north and west coastlands of Europe and the Isles of Britain and thence, ever–westward, to the wilderness of North America has been amply documented. The records of the continuity of the Kingdom, its people, its royal dynasty, and its vast territorial expansion, could not be the private interpretation of any individual or school of theology. It is to be found in the cumulative research of a host of Bible scholars, archaeologists and secular historians.

Now, in light of "so great a cloud of witnesses," how can one account for the persistent blindness of the church in Israel? The early Christians, however, were not without excuse. Israel's great expectations, raised by the prophets, had seemingly come to naught.

They knew the Scriptures' account of the great national promises made to Abraham and his seed. They knew that the children of Israel were the literal, earthly Kingdom that the Lord God formed into His holy nation at Sinai. They knew of the disintegration of the Kingdom following the reign of David's son, Solomon. But, with the coming of the Messiah, they anticipated that "David's Greater Son" would restore the Kingdom to Israel.

The Messiah had come as Saviour and Redeemer, and as the Royal Heir to the Throne. But He was betrayed by His enemies and was given a crown of thorns. True, He had died as the prophets foretold for the sins of His people; but the Kingdom had not been restored to Israel. Moreover, any hope of restoration of the literal, earthly Kingdom of God apparently was aborted when the nation of the Jews was destroyed, as the prophet Daniel had foretold, "and they shall no more be his people: or, and the prince's [Messiah's] future people" (Dan. 9: 26, marginal rendering, King James Version).

In the aftermath of the catastrophic events in Jerusalem, it does not seem unreasonable that the early Christians would conclude that the Old Testament Covenant Promises made to the seed of Abraham were never intended to be taken literally. The whole story must be simply an allegory.

From their myopic viewpoint, God's Kingdom people were beyond redemption. The Jews who were believed to be the Chosen People had rejected and betrayed the Messiah of Israel; and they had been destroyed, as a nation, by a Divine Judgment. It is understandable that early on the church faced a most serious conundrum: *"Had the Lord God failed to keep His promise, to restore again the kingdom to Israel"*?

It was not theirs to question if by a simple expedient they could circumvent such an unacceptable premise. It was simply asserted that the church is "Spiritual Israel." Thus, it was said, God keeps His Covenant Promises to the church—the Spiritual Heir to the Lost Tribes.

It follows quite logically that the church, as "Spiritual Israel," is the temporal manifestation of the Kingdom of God.

Having ascended the lofty slopes of priestly theology this far, it would not be difficult to transcend the literal, earth–bound Kingdom of Scripture—free to roam in the rarefied spirituality of a heavenly Kingdom. A welcome conclusion for a disillusioned people, unable to see beyond their day.

In the early centuries A.D., the concept that the covenants made with the fathers were no longer operative became dogma. But it should be noted that the seeds of subversion were being sown by the Gentile, universal Church of Rome—not by the Apostolic Church in the Isles. Also be it known that the British National Church was founded in A.D. 36, an hundred and sixty years before heathen Rome confessed Christianity.*6*

THE PRIESTLY INNOVATION that the Church is the spiritual Kingdom of God, in place of the literal national Kingdom of the Scriptures, became polarized by a series of doctrinal writings begun in 413 A.D. and issued in several parts for thirteen years until 426 A.D. "They were designed as a great apologetic treatise in vindication of Christianity and the Christian Church (of Rome)—

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6 Ussher, Britannicarum Ecclesiarum Antiquitates, pp 1-4.

the latter conceived as rising in the form of a new civic order on the crumbling ruins of the Roman Empire."7

Such an insidious exegesis of the Word of God can only be characterized as the inspiration of "the father of lies."8 Yet it has become the church's most influential expression of doctrine for nearly fifteen centuries.

Its most corrupting influence is manifest in the churches which came out of Roman Catholicism. The allegorical, or spiritual, interpretation of Scripture not only survived the Reformation, but, today, permeates virtually every mainline denomination in Christendom. In effect, it has relegated the words of Moses and the Prophets to the limbo of anecdotal Sunday School stories, which, taken out of context, are about as meaningful as "Tales of the Arabian Nights" or "Aesop's Fables." Particularly in the present Great Apostasy when "darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people" the prophets' great message and warning to the seed of Jacob is made wholly irrelevant.

These most devastating of doctrinal writings are, of course, none other than Saint Augustine's treatise, "The City of God."

The epitome of the true "City of God" is given in the New Testament by the writer to the Hebrews:

"By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went. By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise:

"For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God." (Heb. 11: 8-10.)

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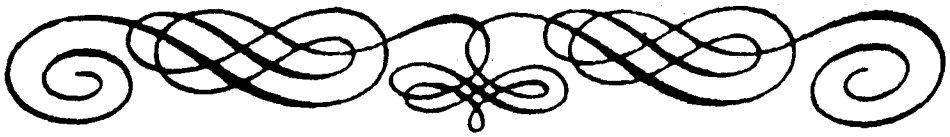
7 *The Encyclopaedia Britannica, Eleventh Edition, p. 909.*

8 *John 8: 44.*



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